

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /055 W

----- 105693

P R 122250Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3685

INFO AMEMBASSY PORT-AU-PRINCE 954

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 2132

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MILI, DR

SUBJECT: RESIGNATIONS OF MILITARY LEADERS: CAUSES AND EFFECTS

REF: (A) SD 2106 (B) SD2131

1. MILITARY LEADERS WHO RESIGNED MAY 9 TO PROTEST PRESIDENT ZURAGUER'S SELECTION OF MAJ. GEN. NEIT NIVAR TO POWERFUL POSITION AS CHIEF OF NATIONAL POLICE HAD SERIOUSLY OVERESTIMATED THEIR OWN POWER. THEY APPARENTLY BELIEVED THAT RESIGNATIONS OF SEC-STATE OF THE ARMED FORCES AND CHIEFS OF STAFFS OF SERVICES WOULD FORCE PRESIDENT TO NEGOTIATE WITH THEM OR TO WITHDRAW NIVAR'S APPOINTMENT. PRESIDENT'S CALM BUT DECISIVE REACTION IN NAMING SUCCESSORS TO THEM ALL MET CONFRONTATION HEAD-ON AND HE APPEARS, AT THIS TIME, TO BE WINNING IT. IF DELAY IN NAMING MILITARY SUCCESSORS TO ADMIRAL JIMENEZ AND MAJ.GEN. PEREZ Y PEREZ WAS FOR PURPOSE OF MAINTAINING AN OPENING TO NEGOTIATIONS WITH THEM; PRESIDENT SHUT THAT DOOR WITH DESIGNATIONS REPORTED REFTEL B. MOREOVER, HIS CONTINUATION OF REGULAR SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES GAVE APPEARANCE OF SUPREME CONFIDENCE IN MEETING THIS CHALLENGE TO HIS AUTHORITY. (SUNCAY'S EL NACIONAL REPORTED THAT PRESIDENT MADE ROUTINE VISIT TO INAUGURATE NEW RURAL SCHOOL TO SOUTHEAST, GOT A HAIRCUT IN HIS OFFICE AND VISITED HIS AILING SISTER, ALL ON MAY 10.)

2. GENUINE FEAR AND HATRED OF NEIT NIVAR WERE PRINCIPAL REASONS FOR DECISION OF CHIEFS TO RESIGN. IN SECOND PRESS CONFERENCE AFTER BECOMING CHIEF OF NATIONAL POLICE, NIVAR PLEDGED TO WAGE WAR WITHOUT QUARTER AGAINST DRUG TRAFFIC
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AND TRAFFICKERS, AND IF IT SHOULD INVOLVE "BIG FISH" IN THE

POLICE OR MILITARY, THEN "LET FALL WHO MAY." FEW ENEMIES OR RIVALS OF NIVAR, EVEN IF GUILTLESS, COULD REST EASY WITH NIVAR AS CHIEF OF POLICE. WITHIN HOURS OF TAKING UP HIS POSITION, NIVAR HAD MADE WIDE CHANGES OF PERSONNEL, SUBSTITUTING HIS OWN FOLLOWERS FOR THOSE OF MAJ. GEN. PEREZ Y PEREZ. NIVAR'S ENEMIES CONSIDER HIM TO BE POWER HUNGRY AND RUTHLESS AND UNDOUBTEDLY BELIEVED THAT HE WOULD IMMEDIATELY SET ABOUT REBUILDING THE POWER BASE WHICH HAD DETERIORATED SINCE TAKING UP HIS DUTIES AS SECSTATE OF THE PRESIDENCY IN 1972.

3. AN IMMEDIATE EFFECT OF THE CONFRONTATION IS THAT PRESIDENT BALAGUER HAS SHAKEN THE CONCENTRATION OF POLITICAL POWER AROUND MAJ. GEN. PEREZ Y PEREZ AND WHEN ALL ASPECTS OF THIS CRISIS HAVE DISAPPEARED MAY WELL EMERGE STRONGER THAN EVER. THIS CONTRADICTS THE WIDELY HELD BELIEF THAT THE MILITARY HAD SIGNIFICANTLY ERODED THE POWER OF THE PRESIDENT.

4. EMBASSY IS AWARE THAT A GOOD DEAL OF NEGOTIATION AND CONSULTATION IS TAKING PLACE BETWEEN DEPOSED MILITARY LEADERS AND THEIR MILITARY COLLEAGUES AS WELL AS BETWEEN THOSE FORMER MILITARY LEADERS AND POLITICAL PARTIES, BUT DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THE RESIGNED MILITARY LEADERS WILL NOW TRY TO CREATE NEW SHOWDOWN WITH PRESIDENT. ALTHOUGH FEAR AND HATRED OF GEN. NIVAR ARE STRONG PASSIONS AND THESE FOUR LEADERS HAVE LOST THEIR GAMBIT, PRESIDENT APPEARS TO HAVE SAILED THROUGH ROUGHEST WEATHER HIS TOP MILITARY LEADERS HAVE MADE IN HIS NINE YEARS AS PRESIDENT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY PERSONNEL, ARMED FORCES, PERSONNEL RESIGNATIONS, PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975SANTO02132
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750165-0918
From: SANTO DOMINGO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750560/aaaaccwf.tel
Line Count: 91
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 SD 2106, 75 SD2131
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 SEP 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <13 NOV 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RESIGNATIONS OF MILITARY LEADERS: CAUSES AND EFFECTS
TAGS: PINT, MILI, DR, (BALAGUER, JOAQUIN), (NIET NIVAR)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006